

February 5, 2011

To the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Bob Wallace. I am a former Dillon police officer and I spent 32 years working in Montana State prisons as a teacher and creator of pre-release centers. I have seen and experienced a lot with our most violent inmates. At one time in the prison an inmate tried to kill me with a shard of glass.

I have come to the conclusion that the death penalty does not serve a purpose anymore and it should be repealed. I can tell you the violent men I observed never thought about the consequences of their actions. Many were mentally ill and did not have that capacity.

I do believe that a maximum-security prison is the right home for some. I do not believe the death penalty makes the prison any safer at all.

There is absolutely no room for violence to take place in our maximum-security prison. If we classify prisoners according to protocol and follow all the procedures, the chances of violence really are quite minimal. It is our fault if something goes wrong. Violence only occurs when we fail to adhere to a policy or procedure. We have gotten so much better over the years as best practices were put into place and now prison killings are not occurring in our state prisons.

We need continued resources to train our hard working corrections officers. We need to staff prisons well and have up to date facilities.

I don't think I could ever participate in an execution and feel so much for my fellow staff who have done so. We don't know what the lasting ramifications of this are.

I think it's interesting to note that the majority of executions that have taken place in our state were performed on people who gave up their appeals. They preferred being put to death rather than spend more time in prison.

This is a policy that has no clear benefits. It does not make our prisons or us safer. We can do that much better by putting resources into policies that directly affect our safety.

I would be happy to talk with you further about any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

Bob Wallace
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